

# STRONG FOUNDATION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

2025



**California Rice**  
It's in our Nature

# STRONG FOUNDATION

**The Commission's mission is to engage in vital policy, regulatory, and public discussions to help secure the ongoing success of our industry.** For nearly three decades, every initiative has been focused on advancing this goal. In partnership with the Rice Research Board, Rice Experiment Station, and the California Rice Industry Association, we continue to build a strong foundation supporting both growers and handlers. This year is no exception.



A highlight of this year's efforts is a farm bill that delivers full funding for crop insurance and significantly increases the reference price for rice. This achievement reflects years of collaborative advocacy by growers from all rice-producing states, working together under the leadership of USA Rice in Washington, D.C.

The Commission remains the industry's primary resource for ensuring compliance with on-farm waste discharge requirements — our largest annual budget commitment. Expanding and safeguarding crop protection tools remains a top priority.

Recognition of the conservation and habitat value of California's working ricelands, as outlined in the Rice Footprint report, continues to grow. This is leading directly to new and expanded conservation programs for growers.

We are connecting with Californians through innovative digital campaigns, building bridges around shared interests like sushi and wildlife.

Finally, we are working to ensure a smooth transition as a new CEO comes on board in late 2026. One that will continue the important work of the industry and expand our future opportunities. Each brick laid in our foundation through hard work and dedication is a testament to the rice industry's ongoing commitment to success. The Commission is proud to do its part.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy A. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**TIM JOHNSON**

President & CEO, California Rice Commission



# CROP PROTECTION

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

## **CRC REACHING OUT TO PARTNERS IN CROP PROTECTION**

The CRC had a busy 2025 with educational tours for industry partners.

The CRC toured Valent's headquarters in San Ramon with key Industry Affairs members. We met with their CEO and senior staff to learn more about their products and commitment to the rice industry.

- In April, the CRC hosted the entire California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) Enforcement Branch on a tour of Montna Farms facilities.
- In July, we had several members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and USA Rice attend a week-long tour of the California rice industry. Tour participants spoke with industry members toured mills, warehouses, driers, rice fields, and research facilities.
- In October, we had the newly appointed DPR Director, Dr. Karen Morrison, and her senior staff tour rice harvest at VA Farms.

Each of the tours provided an opportunity to discuss industry needs and develop relationships with regulatory partners.

**In addition, the CRC is continuing to lead with industry partners** on changes in export MRLs. Support of existing crop protection tools is through collaboration with product registrants to maintain existing products and bring new active ingredients to rice growers.





# WATER QUALITY

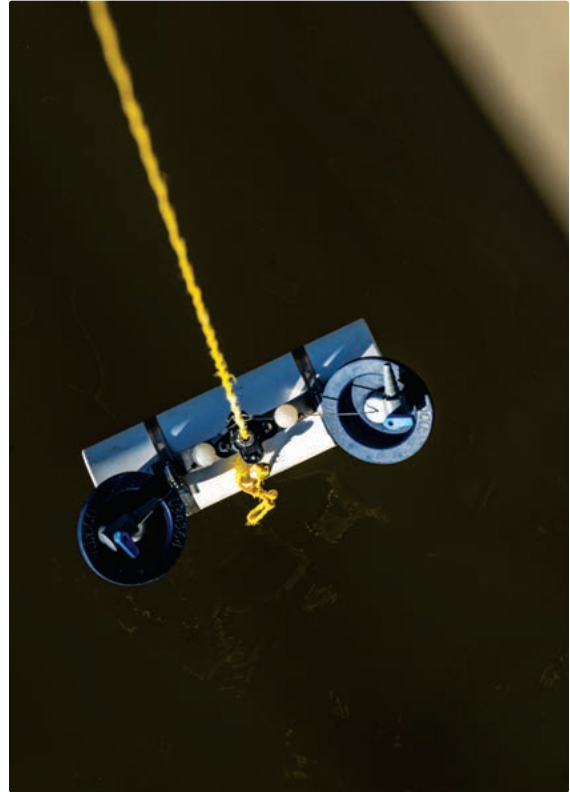
## REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

### 2025 A MONITORING ASSESSMENT YEAR FOR WATER QUALITY

2025 was an assessment monitoring year under the Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) Order, with expanded monitoring to include secondary locations and expanded monitoring constituents, including toxicity.

Results were generally positive, with few detections reported. Pyrethroid detections continued in the early season on the upper Colusa Basin Drain. Growers will report pyrethroid use to the CRC as part of the Management Plan. The 2025 Rice Pesticide Program monitoring results reported no detections above the performance goal. Groundwater monitoring results in 11 wells across ricelands generally reported stable or decreasing nitrate, TDS, and salinity levels.

In addition to the Annual Monitoring Report, the CRC completed and submitted the Groundwater Assessment Report, Groundwater Trend Monitoring Workplan, and the Rice Pesticide Evaluation to the Water Board.





**The CRC continues to participate with the Central Valley Salinity Coalition (CVSC)** to implement the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) program to address nitrates in groundwater and salinity impacts on surface and groundwater from discharges. We also continue to support growers in the WDR requirement to test drinking water wells on rice parcels for potential nitrate impacts.



# RICE QUALITY

## HANDLERS INFORM QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

California rice is known worldwide for its **premium quality**, and the CRC continues to support industry efforts to maintain that standing with the Rice Handler Quality Workshop.

In partnership with the Rice Experiment Station and the Rice Research Board, this half-day meeting featured more than 25 attendees ranging from rice millers to researchers. The workshop spotlighted new variety introductions, the relaunch of M-211 (featuring breeding improvements to reduce kernel breakage and chalkiness), and a discussion of evolving export and domestic market requirements.

The group was also presented with the USA Rice Elite Line Evaluation results. Earlier in the year, California handlers had received samples of Calrose varieties and were tasked with evaluating milling quality. Attendees concluded with an in-house rice tasting and sensory evaluation.



The CRC plans to produce the Rice Grower Quality Workshop next year, alternating years with the Rice Handler Quality Workshop.





“It is fantastic to see handlers engaging directly with the Rice Experiment Station on quality. Receiving the new crop and speculating on its quality is one thing, but applying lessons from prior crops to achieve ongoing improvement sets California apart. The industry works closely to maintain and enhance our competitiveness.”

– TIM JOHNSON



# STATE & FEDERAL POLICY

## AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

The new farm bill boosts the rice industry with a higher rice reference price and full crop insurance funding, supporting grower stability, thanks to broad advocacy. Conservation measures and sustainable policies are progressing in Washington.

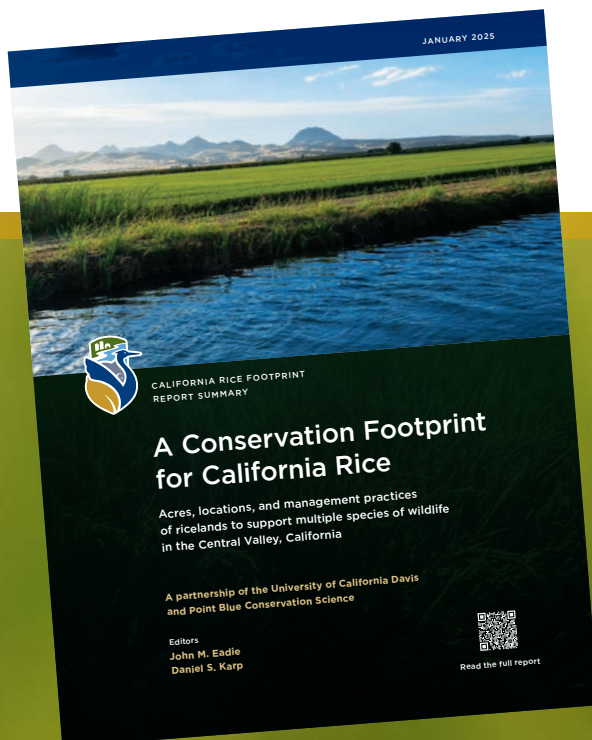
## AT THE STATE LEVEL

This year's state advocacy centered on the rollout of the Rice Footprint initiative, highlighted by the UC Davis report. The findings emphasize the need to maintain at least 470,000 acres of rice annually to sustain both wildlife and industry, with winter flooding delivering critical year-round benefits.

## STATE ADVOCACY

A major focus this past year was the statewide rollout of the Rice Footprint initiative to legislators, state agencies, and our key partners.

In February, the widely acclaimed UC Davis report was launched, offering the most comprehensive assessment to date of rice's wetland habitat value across many species and its critical role in local communities. The findings demonstrate the necessity of maintaining at least 470,000 acres of rice annually to sustain both habitat and industry viability. If acreage falls below 375,000, the resulting crisis would threaten critically needed habitat availability and the long-term stability of the industry. Every rice acre counts, and maximizing habitat value — especially in winter-flooded fields — is key to delivering year-round habitat benefits.



DOWNLOAD THE  
CALIFORNIA  
RICE FOOTPRINT  
REPORT SUMMARY

The Rice Footprint report was formally presented to the California Natural Resources Agency, CDFA, California Senate staff, and a wide spectrum of conservation and water organizations statewide.

This year, our advocacy also included engagement with other agricultural groups to challenge and revise several legislative proposals. Notably, our coalition successfully advocated against bills that would have imposed stricter water quality regulations on farms, incorrectly equated minimally processed products such as rice with ultra-processed foods, and jeopardized the commission's authority to analyze marketplace data effectively.



## RICE ADVOCACY DELIVERS IN WASHINGTON: FARM POLICY UPDATE

After three years of sustained effort, the long-anticipated farm bill — included in the “One Big Beautiful Bill” — has advanced with provisions that greatly benefit the U.S. rice industry.

The outcome is a substantial increase in the rice reference price and full funding for crop insurance, both vital to ensuring the economic stability of rice producers.

USA Rice, collaborating with California and all rice states, served as a strong, unified voice advocating sensible improvements to the rice safety net. In the face of ongoing climate pressures, securing robust crop insurance has remained a cornerstone priority for California. Thanks to the leadership and support of Senator Boozman of Arkansas, the reference price for rice now aligns with that of other major row crops, correcting long-standing disparities.

However, several key components of the farm bill — most notably the conservation title — are expected to be addressed in early 2026. Alongside Representative LaMalfa, the California delegation is working to modernize the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, advocating for 10-year contracts to support winter flooding.





# TRADE

## **AMPLE SUPPLY SUSTAINS CALIFORNIA'S EXPORTS IN KEY MARKETS**

With ample supply for the 2024/25 crop year and a plentiful harvest, our stable supply is sustaining exports of California medium grain in priority markets such as Japan, Korea, and the Middle East.

With the U.S.-Japan Agreement announcement and implementation underway in 2025, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries tender pattern indicates a willingness to live up to its purchase commitment of 75% more rice than the 2024 level.

Significant California Rice promotion activities are executed through our work with the USA Rice Federation. USA Rice continues to be recognized as effective stewards of taxpayer dollars and was awarded a 2025 allocation of more than \$10.8 million for international promotional efforts. The USDA's Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development, and existing Regional Agriculture Promotion Program funding have provided ample opportunities to connect with key traders. In early 2025, we worked with USA Rice to organize two separate promotional events in Tokyo and a reverse trade mission to California for Japanese importers to help cement the historic levels of U.S. imports outside of the annual quota. We also participated in a USA Rice trade seminar in Jordan and Turkey, where exporters met with private sector and government importers.

**USDA recently announced an additional opportunity for this fiscal year to apply for a new \$285 million pot of promotional funding, which will further enhance opportunities abroad for Calrose and other U.S. rice sales.**





# WATERBIRD PROGRAMS

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



## IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS THAT HIGHLIGHT RICE'S UNIQUE VALUE

CRC advanced its Rice Footprint Initiative by working with partners to implement key conservation programs and work to understand rice's unique role in wildlife conservation.

## PROGRAMS



### California Winter Rice Habitat Incentive Program (CWRHIP)

Since 2021, CRC has administered this California Department of Fish and Wildlife program, improving flexibility and participation to sustain vital post-harvest flooding for waterbirds of the Pacific Flyway.



### Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Through USDA NRCS, this program supports diverse riceland practices — flooding in winter and late-summer, and cover crops for nesting habitat.



### California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation

The Foundation continues to expand grower opportunities for flooding during the shoulder seasons to support declining migratory shorebird populations (Spring and Fall Bid4Birds) and experiment with innovative cover crop methods.



### Drought Relief Waterbird Program

Launched by the Department of Water Resources in 2021, this program created flooded habitat on rice fields and wetlands during severe drought. CRC concluded the program and delivered a final report summarizing habitat benefits and scientific outcomes.





**ADDITIONAL WORK TO UNDERSTAND  
RICE'S UNIQUE ROLE IN CONSERVATION**

CRC is exploring some exciting new avenues to contribute to Giant Gartersnake conservation, and to understand how different species of bats use ricelands during the summer.

Together, these efforts help to secure critical habitat, advance innovative practices, and reinforce rice's central role in supporting Pacific Flyway and wetland-dependent wildlife.



# SALMON PROJECT

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

## ADVANCING SALMON RECOVERY THROUGH RICELAND PARTNERSHIPS

California Rice continues to play a vital role in innovative salmon recovery efforts by transforming winter-flooded ricelands into habitat.

Our multi-year project in the Sutter Bypass remains on track with extended planning and collaboration to ensure future success and new partnerships in the Yolo Bypass for large-scale hatchery releases, with millions of tagged salmon fry poised to benefit from ricelands in the years ahead.

## CONTINUING RICELANDS SALMON PROJECTS

### Sutter Bypass Work for Natural-origin Salmon

During the 2024-25 winter flooding season, the main objective of our multi-year Salmon Project was to implement the developing management practice on multiple full-sized rice fields and quantify natural-origin salmon using the selected Sutter Bypass rice fields.

However, adult Butte Creek spring-run salmon (a both State and Federally listed species) returns were critically low the previous Fall season and, therefore, we were prevented from working in the Sutter Bypass.

**With better Spring-run adult returns expected in the Fall of 2025,** we worked closely with NRCS to finalize our second one-year extension of the Project with the hope of executing this Sutter Bypass fieldwork in the 2025-26 winter season. Sutter Bypass flooding events in Winter 2026 will be needed for us to execute the project.

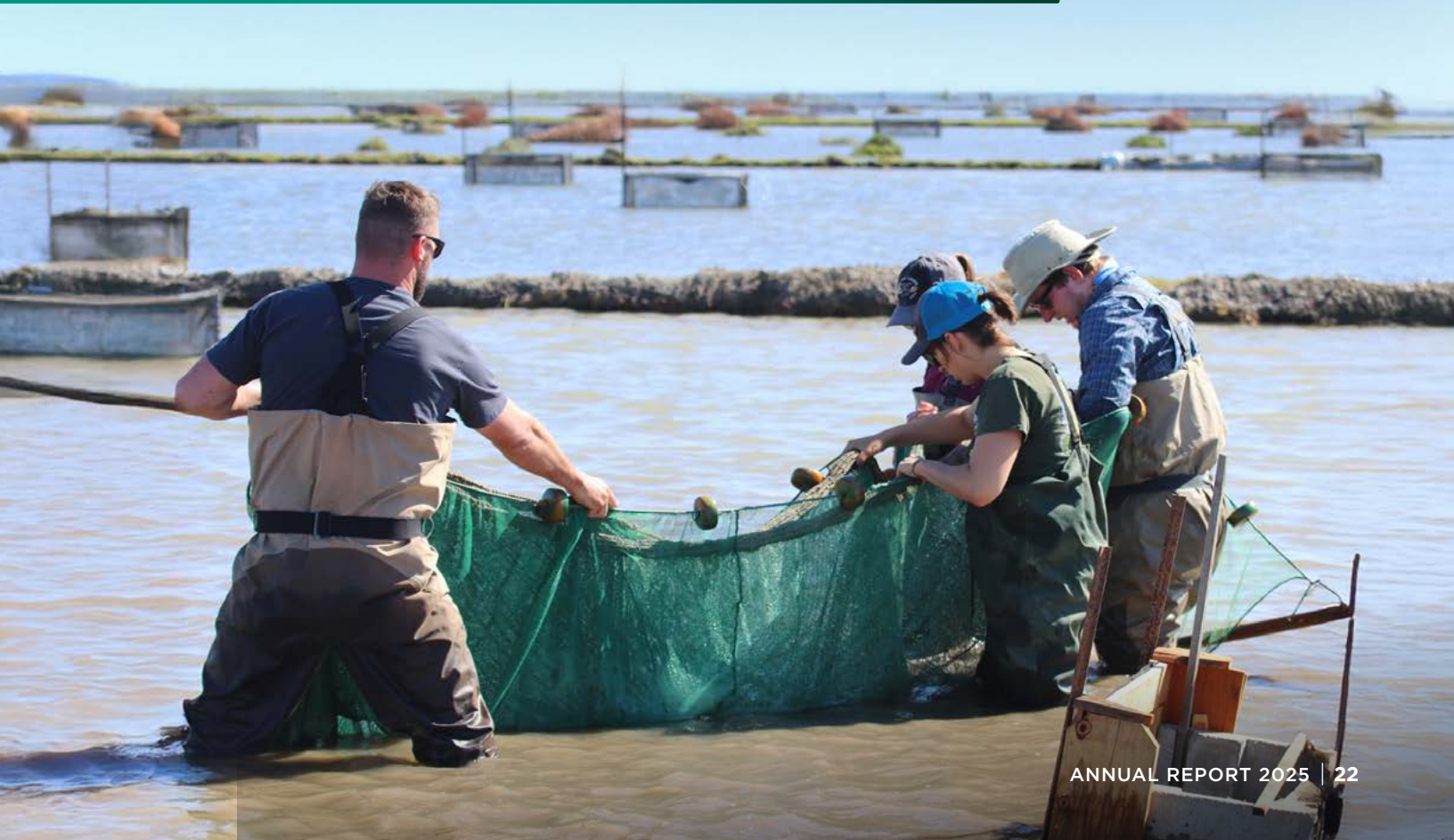


## Yolo Bypass Work for Hatchery Fall-Run Salmon

Our work with a group of fishery agencies, commercial and recreational fishing groups, and select water districts, called the Bridge Group, has evolved into a new 10-year U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plan to annually deploy millions of hatchery fall-run salmon fry into winter-flooded rice fields.

Assuming all these plans and suitable weather conditions are fully realized, we'll be reporting on the outcome of this project in next year's annual report.

**Our efforts this past year have set the stage to place two million salmon fry** into a pair of rice fields in the Yolo Bypass in January 2026. All these fish will be parent-based tagged, meaning each salmon fry's individual genetics will be known, and therefore, the adults returning years later can be identified as coming from the rice fields.





# GRANTS

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



## GRANT WINS

This past year brought several major wins for CRC in securing new and continued funding.

In early 2025, CRC was awarded a \$7.8 million grant to extend the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) with NRCS, supporting waterbird practices. Significant effort also went into successfully wrapping up the current RCPP agreement. In addition, NRCS extended the Salmon — Phase 2 project with a \$70,000 contribution, enabling another year of field research.

Through strong advocacy, CRC secured \$1 million for the California Winter Rice Habitat Incentive Program for 2025–26. Thanks to joint efforts with the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership, an additional \$1.7 million has been committed for 2026–27, ensuring program stability.



**The California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation was awarded four foundation grants** to support grower conservation programs, along with more than \$300,000 from the State for the Bid4Birds program to provide vital shorebird shoulder season habitat.



The Climate Smart Grant, led by USA Rice in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, was temporarily paused during federal grant reviews. Unlike many other programs, however, it was not cancelled and was restarted under a new name — Advancing Markets for Producers — thanks to the strong foundation already established and the emphasis on delivering funds to growers.

CRC also pursued new opportunities this year, submitting proposals totaling \$200,000 for Bid4Birds, and preparing to submit proposals for a new RCPP for salmon practices, and a research project to support Giant Gartersnakes.





# PUBLIC EDUCATION

## COMMUNICATIONS

### EXPANDING AWARENESS THROUGH DIGITAL OUTREACH

Our public education efforts this year focused on strengthening California Rice's visibility and impact across multiple platforms.

These initiatives not only elevated our brand but also dramatically increased engagement, driving millions of impressions, clicks, and interactions that highlight the essential role of California Rice in conservation, culture, and cuisine.

### New logo

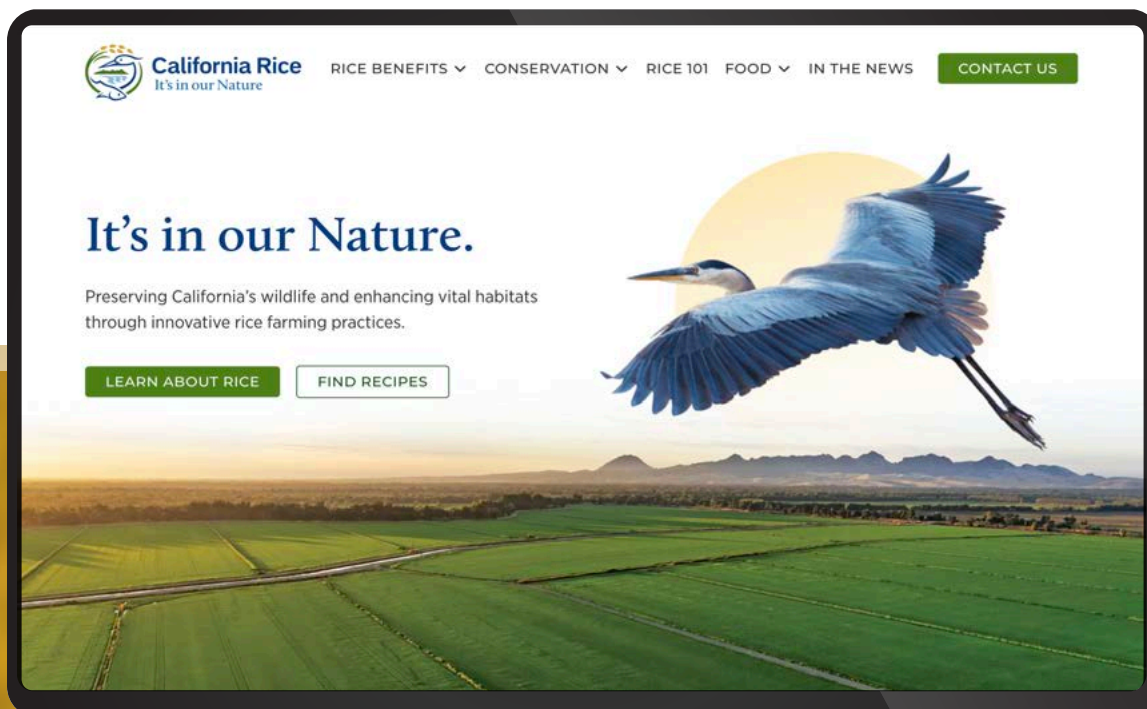
Launched in tandem with the new website, the new logo reflects California Rice's connection to both nature and the region. The egret and fish represent the nearly 230 species that thrive in the rice fields, while the Sutter Buttes symbolize the area's rural culture and agricultural economy. The blue waves represent both flooded rice fields and the historical floodplains they replaced. Encircling the scene, a rice plant forms a protective ring, crowned with rice kernels. This emblem embodies wildlife, conservation and economic growth.



**California Rice**  
It's in our Nature

### New Calrice.org website

After months of planning and building, we launched a newly updated Calrice.org website. In addition to including our newly developed logo, layering in all aspects of our new brand and positioning our new tagline "It's in our Nature" in the forefront of the website. We also included new imagery, interactive elements, and freshly developed pages, all creating a cohesive, informational and visually stunning **Calrice.org** website.



**Targeted digital advertising**

Dozens of highly-targeted digital ad campaigns continue to drive legislators, their closest sphere, the civically-engaged, rice lovers, curious consumers, those interested in salmon recovery and more to the **Calrice.org** website.

We netted more than 15 Million impressions and 760 Thousand ad clicks driving people directly to the **CalRice.org** website. That equals a 1,000% increase in web traffic YOY.



### Social media influencers

We continued our work with FeedFeed by hand-selecting social media influencers and chefs to showcase California rice in various delicious recipes. Each video and post shows how high-quality rice grown in the Sacramento Valley also helps wildlife, our ecosystem and environment.

**54.7M** IN TOTAL REACH

**4.6M** ENGAGEMENTS

**2.4M** VIEWS



**66** MEDIA INQUIRIES

**1.2M** CALRICE.ORG PAGE VIEWS


 **Instagram**  
5,159 FOLLOWERS  
19K VIEWS

 **X (formerly known as Twitter)**  
4,200 FOLLOWERS  
39.9K IMPRESSIONS

 **Facebook**  
30,556 FOLLOWERS  
58.4K REACH

 **YouTube**  
1,809 SUBSCRIBERS  
137.8K VIDEO VIEWS

### Top Post

 **California Rice Commission**  
November 15, 2024

Did you know that California's rice fields do more than grow America's sushi rice? 🍣 Rice fields replicate our state's once abundant wetlands, filling the void as a surrogate wetland that supports both agriculture and wildlife. 🌱

There are 230 wildlife species that live, nest, rest, feed, and rely on California's rice fields to thrive. When planted in the spring, rice fields can benefit fish, birds, Sacramento Valley communities, and the state's ecosystem all throughout the year. In the fall and winter, these fields become essential habitats, providing 200 million pounds of food to migratory birds while simultaneously producing zooplankton—a vital food source for juvenile salmon. This innovative approach demonstrates how farming and conservation can work hand in hand, maximizing benefits for both people and wildlife. 🌱

The #FloodplainForward Coalition brings together farmers, conservationists, and community members to promote sustainable practices that benefit both agriculture and wildlife. Click here to learn more about the coalition's efforts: <https://norcalwater.org/floodplain-forward/>





# INDUSTRY COMMUNICATIONS

## DELIVERING INFORMATION THAT MATTERS MOST

We continue to utilize [CalRiceNews.org](http://CalRiceNews.org) and [eCommunications](#) to inform our members of the latest policy, regulatory, conservation and other valuable news.

In 2025, we started a long-overdue update of the **CalRiceNews.org** website, with the aim of making it even more user-friendly.

**57** TOTAL # OF ECOMS

**27** NEWS

**29** CONSERVATION

**1** WDR

**Most read eComs:**

ARC and PLC for CA Rice

Mandatory Thiobencarb  
Stewardship Training

Sign up for eComs at **CalRiceNews.org**



# FINANCIALS

FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2024 AND 2025

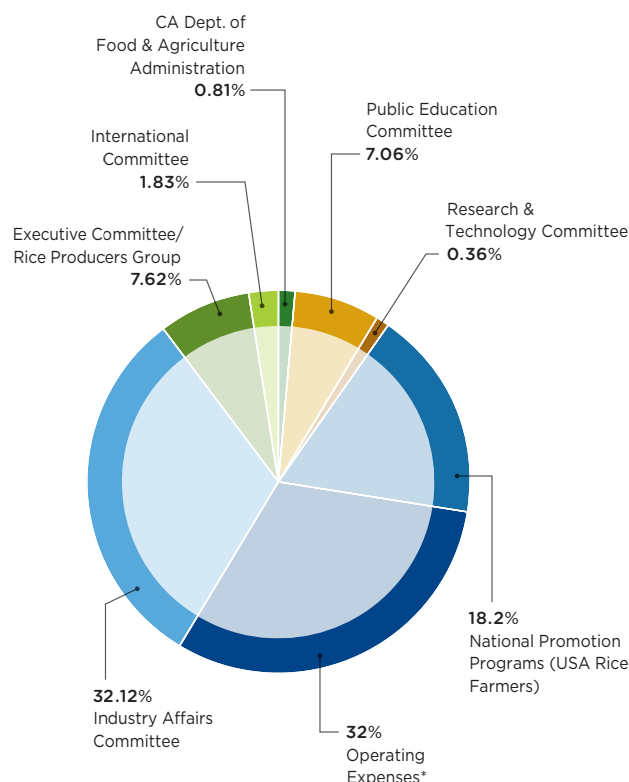
## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2025	2024
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash & Investments	\$16,088,294	\$13,156,382
Receivables	662,126	864,198
Prepaid Expense	50,749	27,211
Equipment	67,590	88,384
Right-of-Use Asset	99,258	99,258
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$16,968,017</b>	<b>\$14,235,433</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	419,599	859,018
Contracts Payable	184,980	175,877
Accrued Vacation	78,334	66,933
Accrued Expenses	1,860	23,610
Lease Liability – Current Position	42,728	42,728
Deferred Revenue	1,116,250	270,539
Lease Liability – Net of Current Position	59,175	59,175
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$1,902,927</b>	<b>\$1,497,880</b>
Net Assets (without donor restrictions)	\$15,065,090	\$12,737,553
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$16,968,017</b>	<b>\$14,235,433</b>

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	2025	2024
Revenue	\$9,834,661	\$13,714,547
Promotion & Regulatory Expense	5,096,865	8,243,471
Operating Expense	2,349,473	2,041,183
CDFA Departmental Expense	60,787	57,631
<b>Unrestricted Net Assets</b>		
Net Assets – <i>Beginning of Year</i>	\$12,737,553	\$9,365,291
Net Assets – <i>End of Year</i>	\$15,065,090	\$12,737,553

## FISCAL YEAR 2024/25



\*NOTE: Chart represents direct spending by category; operating expense not allocated to programs. Audited financial statements available upon request.

"Draft" numbers as of 12/3/25, prior to financial audit completion.

The State of California engaged the services of the CRC to deploy, through contracts, flooded habitat programs to rice and wetland owners, and science on drought-resilient incentive programs with partners.

# COMMITTEES

2024-2025

## EXECUTIVE

Josh Sheppard, CHAIR	Stuart Hoetger
Logan Wilson, VICE CHAIR	Rick Rhody
Drew Becker	Derek Sohnrey
Tom Butler	Gregory Van Dyke

## BUDGET & FINANCE

Stuart Hoetger, CHAIR	Alec Magenheimer
Kurt Barrett	Dave Myers
Chris Crutchfield	Rick Rhody
Sean Doherty	Dan Squires
Matt Doyle	Carson Tibbitts
Mark Kimmelshue	Gregory Van Dyke
Ben Lewerenz	Logan Wilson

## CALIFORNIA RICE PRODUCERS

Tom Butler, CHAIR	Michael Rue
John Cecil	Josh Sheppard
Mike DeWit	Derek Sohnrey
Sean Doherty	Alex Struckmeyer
Deke Dormer	Gregory Van Dyke
Seth Fiack	Nicole Montna Van Vleck
Kim Gallagher	Bill Wallace
Lisa Heuschkel	Everett Willey
Imran Khan	Logan Wilson
Mark Kimmelshue	Kelly Hoppin (A)
Leo LaGrande	Carissa Lee (A)
Ben Lewerenz	Alec Magenheimer (A)
Charley Mathews	

## INDUSTRY AFFAIRS

Kim Gallagher, CHAIR	Mark Kimmelshue
Peter Rystrom, VICE CHAIR	Carissa Lee
Drew Becker	Ryan Lundberg
Joe Borrayo	Alec Magenheimer
Michael Bosworth	Tyler Martin
Tom Butler	Jon Munger
Mike DeWit	Damon Roush
Jake Garcia	Josh Sheppard
Lisa Heuschkel	Christy Trimble-Hauck
Carl Hoff	Everett Willey
Kelly Hoppin	Logan Wilson

## INTERNATIONAL MARKETING & PROMOTION

Michael Rue, CHAIR	Steven Michel
Derek Alarcon	Rick Rhody
Kurt Barrett	Robyn Rominger
Drew Becker	Josh Sheppard
Chris Crutchfield	Alex Struckmeyer
Lisa Heuschkel	Dan Squires
Stuart Hoetger	Steve Vargas
Imran Khan	Alec Magenheimer (A)
Mark Kimmelshue	Ben Lewerenz (A)
David Lohman	Jose Rodriguez (A)

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Chris Crutchfield, CHAIR	Zach Urrutia
Michael Bosworth, VICE CHAIR	Kent Wiley
Matt Doyle	Logan Wilson
Jessica Lundberg	Kelly Hoppin
Alec Magenheimer	Imran Khan
Adam McCalister	Ben Lewerenz (A)
Elise Nelson	Nicole Montna Van Vleck (A)
Robyn Rominger	Alex Struckmeyer (A)

## RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY

Brice Lauppe, CHAIR	Jose Rodriguez
Adam Boles	Carson Tibbitts
Matt Cox	Christy Trimble-Hauck
Sean Doherty	Bill Wallace
Dustin Harrell	Gregory Van Dyke
Lisa Heuschkel	Joe Borrayo (A)
Mark Kimmelshue	Alec Magenheimer (A)
Jessica Lundberg	Derek Sohnrey (A)
Manuel Martinez	Lacey Stogsdill (A)
Jon Munger	

## RICE CERTIFICATION

### PRODUCERS

Charley Mathews, CHAIR  
Brad McGeoghegan  
Josh Sheppard  
Michael Rue

### RICE HANDLERS

Mark Kimmelshue  
Dave Lohman  
Bert Manuel  
Steve Ross

### CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Timothy Blank

### CALIFORNIA WAREHOUSE ASSOCIATION

Joe Tauscher

### CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE RICE EXPERIMENT STATION

Dustin Harrell

### BIOTECHNOLOGY EX-OFFICIO

George Gough

### UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Luis Espino

(A) Alternate

## CALIFORNIA RICE COMMISSION

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**TIM JOHNSON**  
President & CEO

**PAUL BUTTNER**  
Manager of  
Environmental Affairs

**KIM DeVINCENZI**  
Finance &  
Administration Manager

**KATIE CAHILL**  
Communications Manager

**CRAIG RIDDLE**  
Industry Affairs Manager

**KRISTIN SESSER**  
Wildlife Programs Manager

**ADRIA ARKO**  
Grants Manager

**JACKIE WALTER**  
Office Administrator



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1231 I Street, Suite 205, Sacramento, CA 95814-2933  
916.387.2264

**CalRice.org**